DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 474 355 SP 041 455

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TITLE	Let's Talk Story: Professional Development in the Pacific.
INSTITUTION	Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, Honolulu, HI.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	27p.
CONTRACT	ED01CO0014
AVAILABLE FROM	Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, 900 Fort Street Mall, Suite 1300, Honolulu, HI 96813. Tel: 808-441-1300; Fax: 808-441-1385; e-mail: askprel@prel.org; Web site: http://www.prel.org.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Cultural Awareness; *Cultural Differences; Elementary Secondary Education; *Professional Development
IDENTIFIERS	Conversation; *Pacific Region

ABSTRACT

This booklet explains the use of "talk story" in professional development (PD) in the Pacific region, explaining that talk story is informal conversation in which collaboration and cooperation are highly regarded. It explains that the purpose of PD is not just to implement isolated instructional innovations, but also to build strong collaborative work cultures that will develop the long-term capacity for change. It uses as its framework the National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching's (NPEAT) principles for the design of effective PD, also including research and field examples. The booklet discusses research findings in the areas of content, process, and context, examining the nine NPEAT principles and looking at examples of NPEAT in action from the field in the Pacific region. Lessons learned include: involving teachers in the development of PD helps ensure that the strategy is well-matched to the culture; giving out PD menus without guiding selection does not help schools become consumers of PD; check ahead for grouping suggestions; when in doubt, ask questions; and do not rely on facial expressions or tone of voice if one does not understand the language. (Contains 18 references.) (SM)

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Let's Talk Story: Professional Development in the Pacific

SP041455

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Ms. Sandra Taosaka, a former PREL employee, is also the author of "Let's Talk Story," which was published in the March 2002 issue of the Pacific Educator. *Ms. Taosaka has more than 15 years of experience conducting professional development in the Pacific region and continues to work closely with educators, community members, and children from the Pacific region. She currently works with the Hawai'i Department of Education as a School Renewal Specialist and lives in Kona, Hawai'i.*

Illustrated by Dr. Lori Phillips

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This product was funded by the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. ED) under the Regional Educational Laboratory program, award number ED01CO0014. The content does not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. ED or any other agency of the U.S. government.

Let's Talk Story: Professional Development in the Pacific

by Sandra Taosaka

Different cultures have their own rules regarding speech (speaking, listening, and conversing). In Hawai'i, people engage in informal conversations commonly known as 'talk story' in which collaboration and cooperation are highly regarded. In her 1975 article, "Transferable Communication Routines: Strategies and Group Identity in Two Speech Events" (*Language in Society, 4*, p. 54), Karen Watson described these conversations as 'rambling personal experience narratives mixed with folk materials.' In talk story, a person shares a story while others corroborate or add to it as it is being told.

You may find people talking story in the grocery store line, at social events, and on the soccer field sidelines. In some situations, talk story is viewed as a waste of time, idle chatter leading nowhere. But in the right context, talk story can be a powerful tool for learning – both for students and adults.

Talk story is a strategy we encourage in our Pacific Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) project, Pacific CHILD (Communities with High-Performance in Literacy Development). Pacific REL staff and Co-Development Partner (CDP) schools are working to improve reading achievement and to develop high-performing learning communities. Talk story is a strategy that supports both of these efforts. (Taosaka, 2002)

Although I'm not with you in person as you read this article, I would like to use the talk story format and its informal tone. I will share information and add personal stories to strengthen some of the ideas introduced in this article.

Before we begin to talk story, let me warn you. I will use true stories to drive home a few points, because these stories can serve as important illustra-

tions for certain arguments. In essence, I am apologizing up front for any part of this article that may offend a particular culture. Please do not take offense; receive the stories as strong learning points. Ah, I feel better just saying that. Now I feel ready to talk story.

Let me start by sharing one of my favorite quotes: "The purpose of staff development is not just to implement isolated instructional innovations; its central purpose is to build strong collaborative work cultures that will develop the long-term capacity for change" (Fullan, 1991).

These are wise words to which professional development (PD) providers aspire. It is one thing to know what PD should embody; it is quite another to know how to implement an effective PD plan. To add another twist, how do we plan for effective PD in a culture that is not our own?

By the end of this article, I hope you will have a good sense of what to consider when planning PD in Pacific cultures and other cultures that differ from your own. An assumption I'm making is that those who will use this article will conduct PD in a Pacific culture with which they have little understanding and knowledge.

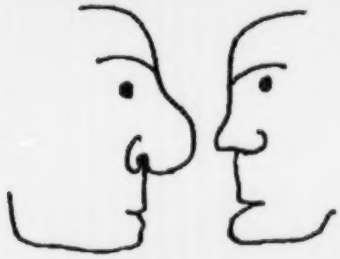
To further clarify what must be considered in planning, this article will use as its framework the National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching's (NPEAT's) principles for the design of effective PD. Research and field examples will also be included.

Explanation of Symbols

True story - collection of professional development tales from the Pacific

Warning, cautions, things to be aware of

Bull's-eye represents helpful hints so you can hit the mark



A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to...

Heather and Joyce were experienced professional developers who had conducted numerous training sessions in different states. They were a dynamic duo – very caring and always careful to exhibit professionalism in all that they did.

A year ago, Heather and Joyce received a special invitation to conduct a weeklong training session on a small Pacific island they had never visited. The dynamic duo pored over the content of the training and exhausted the research material on the subject. They felt well prepared and ready to "wow" the participants with their knowledge and skills.

Their presentation was well received! To thank them, one of the local participants presented them with a gift. In their hotel room, the two excitedly opened the gift and found two beautiful skirts – they had admired the local attire all week and commented to the local women about their good taste in dress. Although the skirts they were given were white and plain, unlike the colorful skirts worn by the local women, they nevertheless loved their gift.

The two made a fateful decision. They would wear the skirts to the celebration dinner that night. Heather and Joyce were invited to a village celebration and couldn't wait to partake in the festivities.

When they arrived, they noticed that the men would not look at or talk to them. In fact, the men's behavior was quite different from their usual friendliness. Feeling quite awkward, the less-than-dynamic duo stood off to the side.

One of the women from the training session rushed over to them. Pulling them aside, the woman told them that the skirts they were wearing were actually undergarments. The men in the village were very embarrassed and could not look at the guests who were proudly displaying their underwear!

Point one, when in a new culture, ask about local dress and please, don't wear only your underwear in public.

Review of Research

I've found that although much has been written about planning for effective PD, most articles focus on specific steps that a PD provider should follow to increase the effectiveness of the training session. I highly doubt that you'll find a section on underwear display, but past and current research gives us much to consider when planning our sessions.

Let's take a look at some research findings in the following three areas.

- Content - the "what" of PD. Content includes the new knowledge, skills, and understandings that are the foundation of a PD effort.
- Process - the "how" of PD. Process not only deals with the type and forms of staff development activities (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989), but also the way those activities are planned, organized, carried out, and followed-up.
- Context - the "who," "when," "where," and "why" of PD. Context involves the organization, system, or culture in which the PD takes place and where the new understandings will be implemented.

Content

The content of PD activities should reflect the needs and interests of students and teachers. When PD activities focus on improving instructional practices and are directly linked to needs, participation at the session and commitment to the change process is greatly enhanced.

Focusing on what students need means taking a look at how they are actually performing. We can get this information from sources such as grades, standardized tests, formative assessments, teacher-made tests, and student work samples. Having knowledge of actual student performance helps in the selection of PD content.

Another benefit in studying student achievement data is the opportunity for teachers to develop new insights into how their students are learning. Teachers can discover student strengths, weaknesses, and instructional needs, explore better ways to construct assessments, and make necessary changes in curriculum.

The content of PD is critically important to its effectiveness. The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) uses the "Not all content is created equal" phrase to remind us to select content that will make a difference. As further support of this idea, Killion (1999) recommends that before designing content for staff development, staff development leaders need to:

- analyze student achievement data and
- study successful programs and best practices.

Through this practice, staff development content will align with specific student needs.

Process

Ecker (1990) wryly described the norm of staff development as the "oatmeal syndrome." A scoop of oatmeal thrown against a wall may hold for a minute or two, but then suddenly a big chunk called "the majority" will fall to the floor. Likewise, in our attempts at "transmission staff development," too much of what we "throw against the wall" falls to the floor unused. (Caution – do not try this at home.)

Why is a big chunk of staff development unused? Perhaps because often we take teaching and learning out of the natural setting of the classroom and into the world of the workshop. In the workshop world, teaching and learning follow a model in which knowledge is transmitted from expert to learners. In this model we view consultants as experts and teachers as learners.

This is counter to what we know about adult learning. Adult learning is enhanced when adults are allowed to work with colleagues to solve a work-related problem that they identified and that represents a collective concern or interest. Effective staff development does not artificially separate teaching and learning.

Extensive research on the topic of effective PD confirms the importance of keeping PD sessions focused on addressing work-related, collective concerns and issues. The following points should be considered when planning for and conducting PD.

- Learners are involved in selecting the content and, where possible, the development of the learning experiences or process to be used (Little, 1993).
- Learners are involved with colleagues in solving problems that represent collective concerns (Brookfield, 1986).
- Learners believe they are being prepared for tasks and responsibilities that are more challenging or complex than current tasks (Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1983).
- Learners are provided with opportunities for carefully guided reflection about their performance of new competencies (Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1983).

- Learners' concerns are understood and used to provide appropriate support as new practices are learned about and implemented (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987).
- Learners are given support after initial training in the form of coaching, study teams, and opportunities to learn by watching colleagues perform (Joyce & Showers, 1988).

Context

Despite its powerful impact on the success of the training session, context considerations are often neglected in PD planning. Several studies (Firestone & Corbett, 1987; Fullan, 1985; Huberman & Miles, 1984) suggest that the uniqueness of the individual setting will always be a critical factor in education. What works in one situation may not work in another. Although some general principles may apply throughout, most will need to be adapted, at least in part, to the unique context of the school.

The teaching and learning process is complex and grounded in contexts that are highly diverse. Acknowledging the powerful influence of context means acknowledging the uselessness of the search for "one size fits all" PD. Because of the enormous differences in educational contexts, there will never be just one size that fits all needs. Think of all those "one size fits all" clothing that never seem to fit right!

Being in a culturally diverse region brings another challenge. Cultures, like the people who shape them, are dynamic. They change and adapt in response to a variety of influences. Some of these influences may be self-initiated while others are environmentally imposed.

The Pacific region has much in its environment that influences our decisions about PD. Environmental considerations include the weather, warm climate, economic conditions, and the inability to access certain resources Western societies take for granted. Other factors are the varied cultural practices and the governing systems involving "chiefs." Each culture has its own cultural protocols that guide communication, interactions, and so on.

The Pacific region challenges us to look for the optimal combination of PD processes that occur in a cultural setting unfamiliar to the presenters and that include content that may be unfamiliar to participants. This is supported by researchers who have found that PD can only be successful when it is shaped and integrated in ways that best suit regional, organizational, and individual contexts and local values, norms, policies, structures, resources, and procedures (McLaughlin, 1990; Talbert, McLaughlin, & Rowan, 1993).

Why should we pay attention to all three? Isn't content the most important?

As Heather and Joyce found out (the hard way), you can't look at things (even skirts) out of context. Content, process, and context work together, and their effect may vary widely as a function of differences in program content, the structure and format of the experience (process), and the context in which implementation occurs (NSDC, 1994, 1995a, 1995b) .

For example, an excellent method such as cooperative learning may be poorly presented to teachers if only a lecture-style is utilized. Teachers may also be expected to implement their new learning in a non-supportive environment, or the new learning may not be part of a systemic change effort. On the other hand, a carefully planned and well-supported effort may be based on ideas that are not particularly powerful or supported by appropriate and reliable research. Both will probably yield the same results – little or no change in student learning.

The interaction between content, context, and process is dynamic and should be considered together, not in isolation, when planning PD activities. Let's take a look at several research-based principles that help us pull together content, context, and process.

NPEAT Principles

NPEAT was a voluntary association of 29 national organizations that linked research with practice around the issue of high quality teaching to increase student achievement. Collectively, they developed 9 research-based principles for effective PD.

The principles below focus on the form – not the content – of PD. Whatever their content and goals, PD activities that have the following characteristics are more likely to be effective than those that do not. The principles are research-based and closely aligned with the standards and principles of the U.S. Department of Education and the NSDC.

1. The content of PD focuses on what students are to learn and how to address the different problems students may have in learning the material.
2. PD should be based on analyses of the differences between (a) actual student performance and (b) goals and standards for student learning.

3. Teachers should be involved in the identification of what they need to learn and in the development of the learning experiences in which they will be involved.
4. PD should be primarily school-based and built into the day-to-day work of teaching.
5. Most PD should be organized around collaborative problem solving.
6. Professional development should be continuous and ongoing, involving follow-up and support for further learning – including support from sources external to the school that can provide necessary resources and new perspectives.
7. PD should incorporate evaluation of multiple sources of information on (a) outcomes for students and (b) the instruction and other processes that are involved in implementing the lessons learned through PD.
8. Opportunities to gain an understanding of the theory underlying the knowledge and skills being learned should be provided.
9. PD should be connected to a comprehensive change process focused on improving student learning. (NPEAT, 1999)

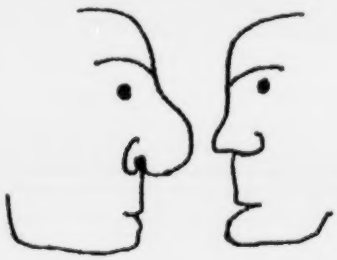
I see part of the PD provider's task as building the school's capacity to become a good consumer of PD. School leaders have many demands on them, and sometimes selecting PD sessions are left to chance or the latest hip innovation or based on the dynamic personality or reputation of a presenter.

Utilizing the NPEAT principles is an excellent way to develop PD savvy. Planning sessions that have the characteristics of the NPEAT principles means having an understanding of the context of the school. What are the standards of that particular district? What are the student needs? How are students performing against the standards? What kind of system is in place for implementation support in the classroom?

Gone are the days when a PD provider received a simple request for a particular "PD Package" or menu. Stand-alone content no longer exists. Context and the delivery (process), which takes into account the uniqueness of the school and its situation, must be considered.

Lessons From the Field

Let's take a look at what we already know from those who have delivered PD in other cultures as well as from recipients of PD delivered by someone outside their culture. These experiences will be tied back to the NPEAT principles as we look at what was and what should be learned from actual situations.



Silence Is Not Golden

When James, the PD provider, used round-robin as a technique, he was surprised when the two normally eager women in the group passed on their turn. In the second round, the women spoke and appeared to be their normally eager selves. Are things better the second time around? What James learned later was that the women could not speak during the first round, because a chief from their village was in the group and hadn't spoken yet. Only after the chief spoke was it okay for the women to speak.

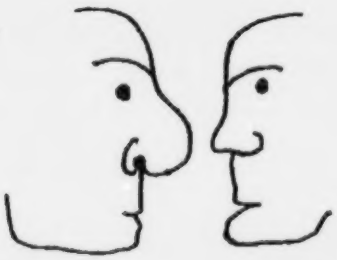
NPEAT in Action

James's situation dealt with participation, so let's look back at the NPEAT principles and see if there is anything about that. Yup! Principle three talks about involving teachers in identifying what they need to learn and developing the learning experiences in which they'll be involved. Think about it. Who best to develop the activities for involvement than those who know the cultural norms that affect participation?

Involving teachers in the development of learning experiences helps to ensure that the strategy is well matched with the cultural practices of the entity.

Each culture has its own unique practices so it's important not to assume that a Pacific culture is the same as all other cultures. It's also important to ask a reliable source for information and to plan accordingly so learning opportunities in the PD session are truly learning opportunities and not sources of discomfort for the participants.

For example, in one culture, if a brother and sister are in a group together, the sister will not/cannot speak. In another culture, participation in a group discussion is limited to the males.



"Oh Waiter, May We Have a Menu Please?"

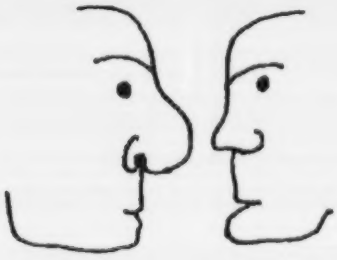
In my experience as a PD provider I have worked with many schools that request PD "menus," hoping that I will provide them with a list of workshop titles from which they may make their selection.

NPEAT in Action

PREL's Pacific CHILD project is a good example of utilizing principles one and two, as assessments are conducted to study student learning. Principle one suggests that the content of PD be focused on what students are to learn. Instead of a restaurant where menus are proffered, Pacific CHILD is more like eating at home where meals are prepared based on what the family needs to stay healthy.

Principle two tells us that the content of the PD should be based on an analysis of the difference between actual student performance and the goals or standards the school has set for student learning. Discussing the importance of this principle with the school raises their consciousness to the importance of focusing on data. Not just collecting data, but making decisions on what the data says. I find that at times we are data rich but information poor. We have numbers and charts but no analysis to determine what we need to do to bring about improvement.

We want schools to be good consumers of PD. Consumers? Yes, PD is an investment of the schools' valuable resources. They need to make wise and timely decisions. Giving out PD menus without guiding selection does not help our schools become wise consumers of PD.



Road Hazard – Bridge Out Ahead

In our first year of work on the Pacific CHILD project, we came to the realization that follow-up support had been a problem for schools. Implementation of workshop strategies was not always successful in our intensive site schools, because the gap between the workshop presentation and actual classroom use was not bridged with support.

NPEAT in Action

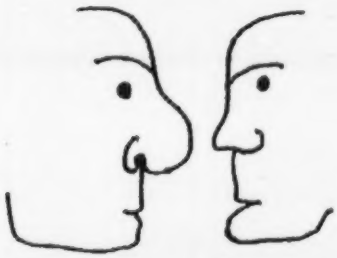
Principles four and six address this situation by suggesting that we use the classroom as the context for PD. This way, learning takes place in a real context where real needs can be met. In addition, to strengthen follow-up support, the use of principle five can provide the means for continuous collaborative support through the development of study groups. Study group members can provide the ongoing and sustained support to teachers attempting to implement new practices in their classrooms.

Geographic distance between the PD provider and the Pacific schools makes continuous support difficult and costly. When planning PD, think outside the box for ways to support implementation without physically being at the school site.

Videoconferencing, online learning communities, peer coaching, study groups, and email are samples of ways to build capacity at the school site. Make follow-up support a priority when planning the PD session.

To drive home that point, listen to one of my favorite PD metaphors about "one shot deals" having little impact. To give it a Pacific twist, I've heard teachers compare isolated PD events to that of a seabird. Imagine this – the seabird gracefully and skillfully flies over the island, offers a dropping or two, and then flies happily out to sea. I don't know about you, but I don't want to be compared to a seabird or its droppings. I believe that creativity is needed in

providing support when dealing with the great distance. I don't want to "fly" in and out of the island without setting up some kind of support system for the school.



Relying on Experts

In many traditional cultures, particular people were considered to be experts in certain subjects or skills. For example, one clan was knowledgeable about traditional medicines, another specialized in navigation, and still another was the expert in fish traps. The knowledge was protected within the clans and not shared. This situation created a dependence on each other. As the school system attempted to build a community of learners, this kind of system or dependency presented a challenge. Instead of seeking solutions themselves, teachers sought an "expert" to give them answers. Let's take a closer look at the NPEAT principles to see how they can help us to move away from this reliance on experts.

NPEAT in Action

NPEAT principle eight tells us that PD should provide opportunities to gain an understanding of the theory underlying the knowledge and skills being learned. It goes on to explain that because beliefs filter knowledge and guide behavior, PD must address teachers' beliefs, experiences, and habits.

Furthermore, specific knowledge and skills that work in one setting do not always work in others. When teachers have a good understanding of the theory behind particular practices and programs, they can productively adapt the learned strategy to fit into a variety of circumstances.

Now you may be thinking that the "clan" beliefs are so embedded that change would be nearly impossible. Interestingly, in some cultures, change was not seen as the enemy. Although the island wished to maintain its strong heritage, there was also the realization that culture was not something that should be preserved, but rather something that would evolve over time. In other words, when change occurs gradually over a period of time, the people are better prepared for it (Legdesog, 2001).

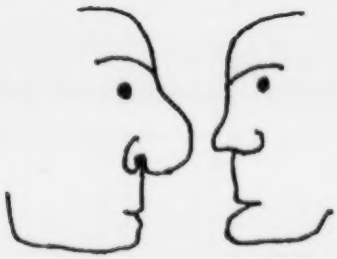
Talking about "clans" makes us realize that although the Pacific region has many modern conveniences, there still exists traditional practices in the various cultures. The following are just a few examples.

- It is preferable that your arms and legs are covered. Be respectful and dress in a way that shows you respect the local culture.
- It would not be okay to use physical/personal icebreakers in a mixed group or ask for personal information. In Western societies, the tendency to ask for personal information is a way to get to know the audience. However, in some cultures it is not considered polite to probe into another's personal history.
- Prayer is considered a part of the workshop session and is used to open and close the day.

Investigate the local protocol before visiting a school. In some cultures you may need to first prepare a tribute (a respectful acknowledgment of local leaders that can be in the form of a basket with local foods of cultural significance) for the men's house or to the village chief.

At some PD events, the participants and presenter sit on the floor throughout the entire session. Remember that in some cultures you should not step over people or their baskets, and be cautious of whom you walk in front of. Know those in your audience and their roles or status in the culture.

Check ahead for grouping suggestions (who to place in small groups). When in doubt, allow participants to self select their groups.



Beyond "Feel Good" Evaluations

For the last principle point, I don't have a "story" but rather a personal observation.

I can honestly say that although I value the NPEAT principles and strive for effective PD, there was an important opportunity that I failed to take advantage of – the evaluation process.

We've often used evaluation forms to find out how much the audience "liked" the presentation and how they would use the information presented. But look at NPEAT principle seven: PD should incorporate evaluation of multiple sources of information on (a) outcomes for students and (b) the instruction and other processes that are involved in implementing the lessons learned through PD.

Many of our evaluation forms come back with high scores indicating a successful session. However, from talking to participants myself, I've learned that even though they may have actually viewed the session as less successful, they still gave high marks on the evaluation form. I believe this difference is due to the structure of the evaluation form used. This is further evidence as to why following the NPEAT principles and investigating the culture prior to the session is so important.

When done right, evaluation yields important lessons for refining PD. For too long we've been looking at evaluation at one single moment, the end of the PD session. But how is the implementation occurring? Has it made a difference in student learning?

These are important questions to reflect on not only for the providers but for the participants in PD as well.

In closing a PD session, be prepared with a short "thank you" speech. The closing remarks are not just highlighting the content of the session. It's an opportunity for the PD provider to thank the participants and to express his/her appreciation.

There's so much to know. How can I possibly present in a culture other than my own?

I hope this article hasn't scared you or given you the impression that you cannot travel to a Pacific island without a year of study on the local practices. In a nutshell, here is what I suggest as preparatory steps:

Ask Questions

- Refer back to the principles and ask questions regarding the context of the school.
- Ask questions regarding the culture and your behavior while on the island – the dos and don'ts.
- Find a reliable contact person that you can communicate with throughout your planning and actual work at the session.

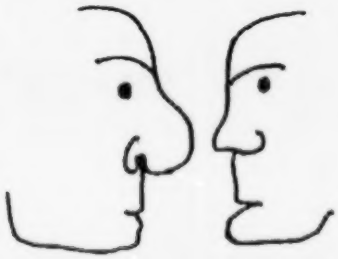
Plan

Involve school staff in the planning of the session. Explore all options to communicate with the school or some of the staff before you arrive. This means being organized as planning cannot take place at the site. You may need to communicate via email, phone calls, or videoconferencing. Participants will appreciate the extra effort you take to meet their unique needs.

Prepare

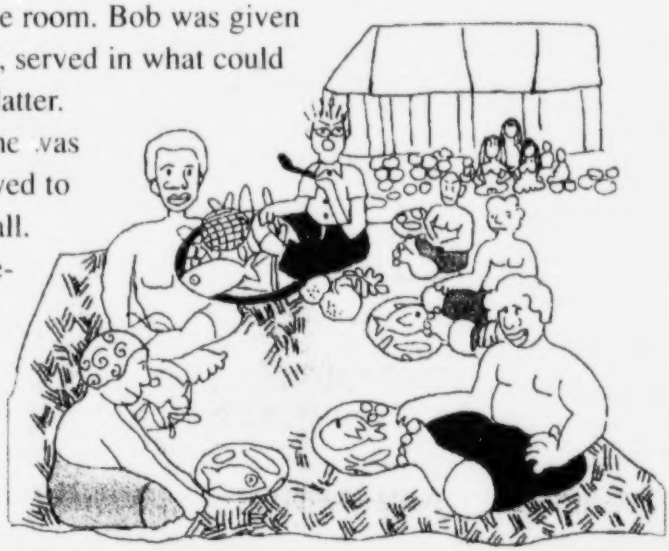
- Have a variety of icebreakers. Do not rely on those that have worked for you in the Western cultures. Look for those that are not intrusive and that do not rely on humor or focus on individuals.
- Get to know the protocol of who must be invited to the session. Are there village chiefs or other dignitaries that must be invited or asked to speak?
- Investigate whether time should be allotted for workshop protocol such as prayer to open or close the session.
- What is the language of the audience? Will there be a language barrier? Will someone assist you with communication?

Of course, no matter how well we plan or ask questions, there may be times and situations where we'll find ourselves "lost" or in unfamiliar territory. When faced with situations such as this, don't be afraid to ask for help. The next two stories demonstrate more examples of when it is important to ask questions before acting.



"I Think I Can, I Think I Can . . . Eat ALL This Food!"

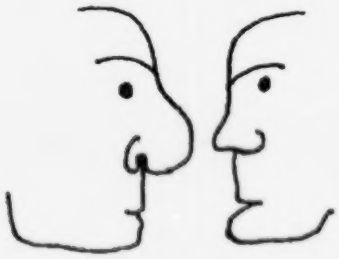
After a workshop Bob, the presenter, was honored at a feast in which lots of food was prepared. The men sat to eat and all the women and children were seated in the back of the room. Bob was given an enormous portion of food, served in what could be considered as a serving platter. There were local foods that he was not familiar with, but he vowed to himself that he would eat it all. He wanted to show his appreciation to the locals for what appeared to have been a great effort in preparing this feast. He wanted so much to be respectful.



Although Bob was stuffed, he plowed ahead, forcing himself to eat. Finally, after 45 minutes of trying to eat everything on the platter, a man sitting next to him said he didn't need to finish it all. As it turned out, whatever the men didn't finish was then served to the women and children. So the more Bob ate, the less could be served to the women and children.

Not wanting to be disrespectful led this presenter to feel even worse – having denied food to the women who prepared it and to the young children.

Again, when in doubt, ask questions – lots of questions, if necessary.



To Nod or Not to Nod

Two program presenters, Maria and Dan, were invited to a PTA meeting to provide an overview of a new initiative. The new project involving the two presenters was to be introduced to the parents at this meeting. As soon as the meeting opened the presenters were in for a surprise; it was being conducted in the local language. The presenters sat quietly and listened to the presentation.

During the open discussion, parents were asked for input. A father stood to speak and he was very passionate and polite. He smiled and nodded at Maria before sitting down. Maria smiled and nodded. When the principal responded to the parent, she responded in English and asked the parents not to be so negative! Maria turned beet red. Not knowing the language, she had unwittingly agreed to whatever negative comment was made about the project. Should someone have been asked to interpret? Again, ask questions when in doubt instead of politely agreeing to something you don't understand.

If you do not understand the language, do not rely on facial expressions or tone of voice. It's a tendency for us to nod in agreement even if we don't know what is being said. The most prudent thing to do would be to ask for an interpretation before committing to any kind of comment.

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Summary

I've found conducting PD in a culture that differs from my own to be a wonderful, exciting, and memorable experience. PD providers need to keep in mind that the purpose of the travel is to present content, to teach, and to build the capacity of others. Providers are there to ensure that the content is delivered in a way that takes into consideration the context of the school and culture in general.

In order to blend content, process, and context (culture), this article proposes that the NPEAT principles be used to guide the PD planning and the true stories and lessons learned be used to raise the consciousness of providers about the extra considerations that must be made when interacting with a new culture.

Most PD providers have strong relationship building skills. Adding NPEAT standards and cultural considerations increases the success of the sessions and builds the promise of creating high-performing learning communities where PD is focused on improving teaching practice in order to increase student achievement.

In closing, take the "test" below and see if you are ready to take on the "Pacific world" and other cultures outside your own. And if you venture out and make a few mistakes, learn to laugh at yourself and try again.

NPEAT in Brief

- The content of our PD session focuses on what students need to learn, and it will address the different problems students may have in learning the material.
- Our PD session addresses the difference between actual student performance and the goals for student learning.
- We have involved teachers in planning the session and more specifically in developing the learning experiences in which they will be involved.
- The PD session will be primarily school-based and built into the day-to-day work of teaching.
- The PD session utilizes opportunities for collaborative problem solving.
- There are plans for continuous and ongoing support for further learning.
- Multiple sources are being used in the evaluation of the PD session.
- The PD provides opportunities to gain an understanding of the theory

underlying the knowledge and skills being learned.

- This PD session is connected to the broader improvement efforts of the school.

Cultural Considerations

- Establish a contact in the entity to assist in the planning. Have the contact serve as a kind of cultural liaison to ensure that the PD is culturally appropriate.
- Prepare questions to learn more about the culture, the school community context, and student achievement.
- What are some successful strategies that have worked in that particular entity? What has not worked and should not be repeated?
- What is the protocol that guides my planning, behavior, and delivery of content?
- What will be the language of the participants?
- What are the dignitaries' and participants' expectations of PD providers in the entity?
- What are the entities' dos and don'ts for PD providers visiting the entity?

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